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[Phrase Trainer](#)

Make'em play so you can learn!

Lots of people do the playing: guitars, pianos, tubas, whatever you might dare to think of. Many of these people compose their own songs but there are a whole lot more who just like to play their favorite artists' songs. So they start to learn these songs: by ear, tablatures, scores and so on. Those lucky enough to both get their hands on the proper tabs/scores and know very well how to read them have greater chances to play those tracks as their original artists do. But the rest just have to rely on hearing. How many times did you, readers who like to play an instrument, get stuck in the middle of a song you wanted to play and just because things were so fast or so "messy" you couldn't understand a thing? Since I am a rhythm guitarist, I'll just have to admit I had great trouble getting along and playing some solo-type phrases from various songs I was preparing to cover. Countless times I listened over and over again to those fragments, but I didn't succeed every time. This is why softwares like Phrase Trainer are being developed: to help people get to play the lyrics and songs they like as they were meant to be played. No matter how complicated or fast a sequence may be, the Phrase Trainer will be able to slow it down for you, so you can get all the notes and their order and allowing you to play it over and over again. **The Looks** Seeing the Phrase Trainer for the first time, I was really impressed by its sleekness and professional appearance. Looking rather like a real-life tool, like metronomes or even drum-machines, it is obvious that the Graphic User Interface of Phrase Trainer has been carefully developed following the lines and functions of real, physical tools. What made me like the looks of this program almost instantly were exactly the large main control-buttons, extremely intuitive, with large markings on them and no fashion-like style. Be those controls transport ones or just sliders on the 5-band EQ, they look exactly as if they were made for finger-pressing. This gives a very nice feeling of safety and ease of use which helps you a lot to relax and concentrate on the singing rather than on using the software. The Phrase Trainer has no skins and I consider this a pretty good thing; a good feature, achieved by omitting some options. After all, you start this program to exercise your skills, not to be glad you have a good-looking software on your screen! The color used is a dark-polished titanium-look, equally spread and very eye-comforting, allowing an easy contrast with the rest of the elements. A large rotary volume-knob and a large 4-way pitch/tempo button make the Phrase Trainer resemble even more the actual drum-machines or other sequencing gadgets available on store shelves. The presets-pane is also highly-visible, right next to the reverb and stereo width controls. About half the available area in the Phrase Trainer is dedicated to a screen where the name/tagging of the loaded songs is shown, as well as information regarding elapsed and remaining time, pitch and tempo. A sine-view of the currently-loaded track allows you to visualize the portion of track you want to sample and loop, at the same time giving you info about the current position of the sampled interval as you move it forward and backwards or resize it by means of dedicated half/double buttons. **The Works** The first really nice thing about the inner works of Phrase Trainer is that it knows how to handle mp3, wav, wma and so on; meaning you just load almost any major kind of audio without fear it won't play. You can even drag and drop these files: the Phrase Trainer supports some sort of short playlist; up to 8 songs can be simultaneously loaded and played, even separately looped and double clicking on each of these files automatically triggers the playback of the first song on this screen. The looping/sampling process is extremely easy to do, so in just seconds you'll have delimited the portion which interests you most, ready to infinitely play. You just have to click on one of the 4 available loop-buttons, each corresponding to a different section and then click on the sine-view.

Then pushing the Set In button adds the starting-marker of the loop-section. You'll then have to click the second time to define the endpoint of the selection and finally press Set Out. At this moment the section between the 2 markers will be highlighted and ready to be played. You'll have to repeat the same operations for loops 2, 3 and 4, if needed. In order to hear better the selection(s) you have made, you can choose to alter the sound by means of equalizing using presets or just directly moving the 5 faders. You can also make a more distinct sounding selection by "widening" the stereo field and you can also add and configure a verb-type effect. Besides sampling a selection and continuously playing it, the main purpose is to either slow down or re-pitch the playback of these sections. Phrase Trainer is a really helpful tool when you effectively drop playback tempo to 50% of the original speed, without significantly damaging the sound. Moreover, it is very likely that the song you want to study is played in another key, thus making it much harder for you to "catch" the right notes. Tired after some tens of minutes of search on your instrument? No problem, the Phrase Trainer will solve this problem, too: remember about the pitch-shifter I was talking about? Well, this is a situation which is perfectly fit for its use: you just change the pitch upwards or downwards with up to 12 semitones (which is extremely much) so you get a tune fit for the tuning of your instrument, whatever this may be. Now it's just up to you to get the rest of the things done and make that song sound. **The Good** Phrase Trainer is one helpful and very easy-to-use software and I am quite sure anyone will learn how it works in just minutes. It is such an intuitive-interface software that even the most inexperienced users can benefit from its capabilities after a very short time, while good and easy features ensure a fast work and satisfying results. **The Bad** The only bad thing I noticed is the absence of a zoom tool for the sine-view. Such a zoom tool would come in very useful for a more precise selection-definition. **The Truth** A really useful piece of software for a player's daily routine when he exercises or works on some high difficulty/complexity covers. Nice support for major audio formats and very flexible pitch/tempo adjustment. Well worth the money for those who are much into covers! You can watch some snapshots of Phrase Trainer: